

STATE SENATOR • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release



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Schauer Holds Jackson Forum on Winter Heating Costs

Schauer: We need action at all levels of government.

LANSING—With high home heating costs straining most family budgets, Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Jackson and Calhoun Counties) this evening held a town hall meeting focused on finding answers to this winter's high heating costs and providing homeowners with ways to manage natural gas consumption. The meeting was held at Lifeways in Jackson. He was joined by expert panelists Ken Toll from the United Way of Jackson County, Kathryn Keersmaeker of Consumers Power, Brenda Leonard with the Community Action Agency, and Virginia Fetterman from the Salvation Army.

"We have citizens who have to choose between paying for prescriptions and food or for heat," said Schauer. "That's a choice no family should be forced to make."

Following projections by the Michigan Public Service Commission that natural gas heating costs would sky-rocket this winter, Senate and House Democrats established Project WARM or Winter Assistance and Relief in Michigan. The package of bills, awaiting action in the Republican-controlled legislature, attacks the home-heating problem with an assortment of weapons. Highlights of the plan include a ban on winter shut-offs, an emergency fund to pay exorbitant and unexpected bills, strengthening heating assistance programs, and incentives for home weatherization.

"We need help from the federal government, but we have to find solutions at all levels of government," said Schauer. "Senate Democrats proposed legislation in October that would go a long way to helping out Michigan citizens cope with winter heating costs. This should be top priority for every elected official."

Senator Schauer also discussed already-existing federal and state cost-mitigation programs and gave out information on managing natural gas consumption. The Senator also recapped Governor Granholm's new "Save Energy with Ease" proposal to provide free programmable thermostats, high energy conservation kits, and consumer education to Michigan residents.

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Mark Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.